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2 September 1986EAST EUROPEANS DEPLOYING IN SUPPORT OF SOVIET GLOBAL OBJECTIVES

Gorbachev is increasingly mobilizing his East European allies in support of shifting Soviet foreign policy priorities. Kadar's renewed interest in visiting the US is one example; new East European initiatives toward China and Israel are likely to be far more important.

-- China. [redacted] East Germany's Honecker plans to visit China in October -- with Kadar and Jaruzelski likely to follow; and the Czechoslovaks, too, have been told of a Soviet-led Warsaw Pact initiative to improve inter-party relations with the Chinese. Although lower-level Chinese visits to Eastern Europe have been on the rise in the last few years, initiatives to normalize inter-party relations would mark a decisive break with past policy and offer much greater scope for future East European contacts with the Chinese.

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-- Israel. [redacted] Mrs. Shamir has accepted an invitation to visit Bulgaria this week; [redacted] Although not so far advanced as the Chinese initiatives [redacted] would mark a significant foreign policy departure for the East Europeans.

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Although these approaches are clearly initiated and coordinated by the Soviets, they contrast sharply with earlier Soviet efforts to rein in separate East European diplomatic initiatives -- as in the cancellation of the planned Honecker visit to West Germany. They also have longer term potential for fostering separate East European interests in foreign policy areas that formerly had been off limits.

As regards China and Israel, the East Europeans have long-suppressed motives of their own, chiefly economic, for moving toward better relations. Over the longer term, growing economic involvement with China and Israel might serve to alter East European foreign policy priorities and thereby constrain future Soviet policy options. As the Soviets learned with regard to their detente initiatives in the 1970s, harnessing the East Europeans to Soviet international gambits is not without its liabilities.

-- Most important are the potential consequences for the East European Communist parties of the opening to China. For years vilified as the bete noire of international Communism, China has suddenly become an acceptable partner -- and this at a time when China is behaving more heretically than ever. Such ideological deviations may be of little concern to the populations at large,

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but they are likely to disorient the party faithful and discredit the hard-line ideologues associated with past anti-Chinese campaigns. And the "Chinese model" -- now a quite different, and distinctly capitalist, model -- may vindicate the reformist line in Eastern Europe.

- The impact on Romania may be to goad Ceausescu into new efforts to recover lost ground internationally. For years the only Warsaw Pact state having diplomatic relations with China and Israel, Romania may soon find its maverick posture coopted by a new Soviet-led approach toward those former adversaries. And as China and Israel have always figured prominently in Ceausescu's independent-minded foreign policy line, he may find his international position circumscribed and his domestic authority weakened.

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